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## CHARLES HOOLE, A SCHOOLMASTER OF THE COMMONWEALTH

### HIS NEW EDUCATIONAL STANDPOINT

It is very necessary and hath been ever wished that some of our most famous and best schoolmasters, would for the benefit of others set themselves on work, to find out and publish the exactest method of teaching which might be generally received, till a better were known ; for by that means they should do much good to the Church and the Commonwealth.—*Charles Hoole in Scholastic Discipline.*

I conceive it will be no small satisfaction to parents and a mean to cease the indiscreet clamours of some against schoolmasters, to see what method they observe in teaching and how their children profit by degrees, according to their present apprehensions and growth in years.—*Charles Hoole in the Master's Method.*

In 1660 Mr. Christopher Wase, M. A., teacher of the free school of Queen Elizabeth at Dedham, in Essex, wrote *Methodi Practicae Specimen. An Essay of a Practical Grammar; or, an Enquiry after a More Easie and Certain Help to the Construing and Parsing of Authors; and to the Making and Speaking of Latin.*

In his epistles to the reader, Mr. Wase urges the desirability of the student understanding grammar and being able to pass on with ease and speed through the received authors. He says:

I find by a book newly published and come to my hand that a like design hath been contrived and successfully practised by Mr. Charles Hoole. I have reason to be much confirmed by the testimony of so worthy an author ; whom, though by face unknown, yet from his translations seen by me and the preface to Cato's *Distichs*, I have honoured not only as candid and industrious, but acutely judicious in didactics.

Let us turn to Hoole's preface to Cato's *Distichs* and see the method so highly admired by the contemporary.<sup>1</sup>

The so-called (by Wase) preface is by Hoole termed: "An advertisement touching Cato and some other school-books translated by Charles Hoole." After speaking of his conviction that

<sup>1</sup> The *Disticha de Moribus* of Cato, together with the *Dicta insignia septem sapientum Graeciae* and the *Mimi Publani sive Senecae Proverbia* are published in English and Latin side by side — by Hoole, 1659. They are given "whereby little children may understandingly learn the rules of common behaviour."

Latin can be as readily learned as French, and at any rate, more perfectly, if only the right method is adopted, Hoole lays down his first principle that school-work must proportion and adapt itself to the capacity of the child. Yet this cannot be taught, for it is of the nature of insight. *Scire quid deceat est caput artis quod nulla arte docetur.*

Assuredly, however, a minimum of grammar being known, it is sound teaching to lead the child to translation of authors. On certain days of the week the *Sententiae Pueriles* can be written out and learned by heart. These are "sentences for children . . . for the first enterers into Latin." Hoole's selection of these sentences taken from the collection by Leonard Culman was published in 1658. Sentences are divided according as they contain two, three, four, or more Latin words. On other days, instead of the *Sententiae pueriles*, they are to learn to talk with one another from the *Pueriles Confabulationum* or *Children's Talk* (published 1659) and Corderius's *School-Colloquies*. Minute directions are given as to the translation and retranslation into paper books of the *Sententiae pueriles* and of the analysis and reconstruction in talk of the *Colloquies*. Always there is to be a paper book at hand with grammar rules written after the manner of commonplace heads, and examples found in authors are to be placed under the rule. This paper book becomes a series of elegant extracts as well as of self-discovered examples. "It maketh the matter, words and phrases in every lesson their own, and stores them with copy and variety of both, to use upon any occasion. And this is it which Mr. Brinsley truly calls 'the very picking out of the kernel and the life of every lecture.'"

Hoole's defense of translations is very vigorous. His main points are: Little children are better employed in something practical, *i. e.*, in repeating and imitating something they understand. If the learner sees his own language there is so much more of what is known by which he can compare the unknown. They can get over so much more ground in reading authors with a translation rather than without. The translation ought to supply good English; the child's English is necessarily weak. (Hoole writes these books for children of 7 or 8 years of age.)

As to the manner of translating it can only be observed : Many men, many minds. "Some set down the English only, as Mr. Brinsley; some the English and Latin together, and that word by word, as Mr. Haïne; or clause by clause as Dr. Webbe; or speech after speech as Mr. Bernard."<sup>1</sup> "I have endeavored," adds Hoole, "to frame my English style to the Latin so as at once to reach the author's true meaning, and to condescend to the capacity of a young learner." Accordingly Hoole has felt himself free to apply different methods at different times.

Hoole's main positions are therefore: (1) Children's capacities are limited and these must first be understood before work is set. (2) The intricacies of Latin grammar are too great for children, therefore it must be made as simple as possible. (3) Children cannot puzzle out the English of the Latin, therefore translations must be provided. (4) If translations are properly used, together with written and oral castings and recastings, there is an economy of time and trouble, in the end, in learning Latin.

As in duty bound, having complained of the tedious grammars then in use, Hoole wrote a Latin grammar tending to the schoolmaster's ease and the weaker scholar's encouragement in the first and most wearisome steps to learning. The book is named: *An Easie Entrance to the Latin Tongue*. It contains the testimony of two eminent schoolmasters concerning the author, which may perhaps here be quoted:

Having had good and sufficient demonstration of Mr. Charles Hoole's abilities, for the teaching and ordering a grammar school: which I duly apprehend both from my conference with himself and by his writings tending to that purpose; and showing how maturely he hath considered and thoroughly weighed and judged of matters of chief concernment for that purpose; I do hereby certify all, who may desire notice hereof, that I conceive him to be a man of skill, dexterity and activity and many ways fitted for the governing and teaching a grammar school; and educating youth in all good literature for the university. In token whereof I have hereunto subscribed my hand. May 10, 1642.

<sup>1</sup>William Haïne wrote *Lillie's Rules Construed* 1653; translated the authorized Latin Grammar; Dr. George Webbe translated the *Andrea* and the *Eunuch* of Terence 1629; Richard Bernard translated Terence's *Comedy* into English 1598.

By me Thomas Hayne,<sup>†</sup> late School Master of the City of London's School in Christ's church.

*Idem testatur etiam Simon Humfrey Scholarcha Stamfordiensis.*

To the *Easie Entrance* Hoole writes a preface by way of premonition to the learners of this book, and especially to children of the lowest form in a grammar school.

Hoole must have been a greater lover of children even than of grammar or he could hardly have begun as follows:

Children! It was for your sakes I undertook, and have now (by God's blessing) performed this following work; the scope whereof is (in a playing manner, and according to grammar-order) to acquaint you with the grounds of grammar and withal how to practise them; so to set you on in an intelligent course of construing, parsing, translating, writing and speaking Latin; that no difficulties may occur in after-learning which by a little direction of an able teacher, you may not cheerfully over-pass.

Hoole does not hesitate to treat the child as a reasonable being. He talks to him about the grounds of grammar, and enters somewhat minutely into the best ways of "getting" the grounds more easily. He takes the child-reader into his confidence with regard to the vocabulary, and gives such suggestions as the following:

You may take the opportunity once a week to dispute with some of your fellows, who can give the most Latin words under one and the same head; and this practice will exceedingly quicken your understanding, and confirm things in your remembrance. To ready you for finding any word (after once you have seen under what head it is placed) you have each several head set down in the top of your pages; and to let you see the coherency of words according to the nature of things you have a synopsis (p. 326).

After the vocabulary, Hoole draws attention to the sundry short examples applicable to the rules. Then, too, he has included collections out of the lowest authors, which will save books and give an insight into different Roman writers so that "you may pitch upon that which doth most delight you."

The other points on which Hoole lays stress, in this important preface, are "the more elegant expressions," which he inserts, to show differences between the English and the Latin, and the first principles of Christianity which are annexed "that

<sup>†</sup>Not to be identified with William Haine. Thomas Hayne wrote *Grammaticis Latinae Compendium* 1640.

by them you may learn what you are to believe and to do in the way to salvation." Hoole favors religious education, and even insists on it in this Latin grammar: "To train you up in Scripture learning, you must keep a constant daily course of repeating a verse by heart every morning and reading a chapter every evening at the school; and I hope your parents and friends will see that you dispatch this easy task at home." We shall see, further on, that other means of religious instruction were to be used.

On such easy terms is Hoole with children that he presumes to tell them that this book is concerning boyish matters suited to their capacity and he hints that learning this is a year's pastime, the reward for which will be a completer grammar. So reasonable does he think children that he writes thus suavisly:

One vocation or other will ere long call you from the school. And if you mean to undertake any commendable profession hereafter you must learn whilst you are at the school. Wisdom herself saith, I love them that love me and those that seek me early shall find me (Prov. viii, 17). It will be miserable for any of you to bewail himself hereafter and say, How have I hated instruction, etc. (Prov. v, 13, 14). Therefore, good children, do you now apply yourselves to get learning; make the grammar school to be indeed *Ludus Literarius* and the schoolmaster to become *Ludi-magister*, i. e., *Moderator ludi* (as the learned Romans were wont to name them in proper terms), so shall you never undergo the severity of the rod or ferrule; nor your master at any time be constrained to act that irksome drudgery of whipping.

So wrote Hoole in 1649, and in 1659 we find him still a believer in the "sweet reasonableness" of children. In that year Hoole translated the *Orbis Pictus* of the "reverend and singularly ingenious"<sup>1</sup> Comenius. On the title-page Hoole describes Comenius's book as "the most suitable to children's capacities of any that he hath hitherto made."

With much care, the grounds of his pedagogical belief are stated, in the preface to the translation. To understand things at all they must be distinguished from one another, and for this reason the names of things must be known. Comenius had devised his *Orbis Pictus* to consist of names of things in both Latin and the vernacular, both of which the pupil was to learn,

<sup>1</sup> CHRISTOPHER WASE, Preface to *Methodi Practicæ Specimen*.

together with pictures of the things and a short written description. "Children being won hereunto and drawn over with this way of heeding may be furnished with the knowledge of the things that are in the world by sport and merry pastime."

Hoole takes the opportunity to reaffirm all that Comenius had written in support of his views. He says of the ordinary teaching of Latin Grammar: "We do teach children as we do parrots, to speak they know not what; we, taking the way of teaching little ones by grammar only at the first, do puzzle their imaginations with abstractive terms and secondary intentions, which, till they be somewhat acquainted with things and the words belonging to them in the language which they learn, they cannot apprehend what they mean." The remedy is: Adapt your teaching to the capacity of the child. Show him pictures with names in Latin and English underneath. Let him read the descriptions given in English, and then let him see the Latin equivalent. Then he is to learn by heart the description and to pick up the Latin grammar as he needs it to understand the passages.

Hoole mentions that he had himself had in mind writing such a work as the *Orbis pictus* whilst his own child was alive, but with the publication of Comenius's he desists from his own and translates that great man's book. Almost impassionately he addresses schoolmasters:

You, then, that have the care of little children, do not too much trouble their thoughts and clog their memories with bare grammar rudiments, which to them are harsh in getting and fluid in retaining, because indeed to them they signify nothing but a mere swimming notion of a general term, which they know not what it meaneth till they comprehend also particulars, but by this or the like subsidiary (book) inform them first with some knowledge of things, and words wherewith to express them, and then their rules of speaking will be better understood and more firmly kept in mind.

Such a passage reads to us like a truism, but Hoole's was a generation which yet more than half believed that education consisted in scholarship, into which no child could enter, and that, however excusable his ignorance might be, yet childhood, by its lack of knowledge, was necessarily uninteresting and unworthy of consideration. These are memorable words in which Hoole

sums up his view, and as true today as in 1659: "It is *the very basis of our profession* (of schoolmaster) *to search into the way of children's taking hold, by little and little, of what we teach them.*"

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NOTE.—In the 1659 edition of Charles Hoole's translation of the *Orbis Pictus* is the following interesting announcement :

A PARTICULAR ADVERTISEMENT.

Whereas divers Gentlemen of good quality have been very earnest heretofore with Charles Hoole as well to Table as teach their Children ; This is to give notice to all, but especially those of his acquaintance, that he is now fitted of an House and all things answerable to their meet accommodation, and will be diligent himself, and maintain an able Usher also in his House to attend their Teaching, and his Wife and her Servants, ready to see to their wholesome dyet, and cleanly ordering, upon a Rate answerable to so great a Charge and Pains, as are thereunto required. At the North-East Corner of the New Buildings in the Token House Garden in Lothbury, London. Nere the Royal Exchange.